

SONG BREAKDOWN & TEXT SYNOPSIS:
“CONGO SQUARE”
(as featured on CD recording)

ACT 1

The place is New Orleans, USA. The scene is a dimly-lit room where cobweb-covered Mardi Gras costumes, floats, elaborate masks and costumed mannequins have been stored for years. Prominent in the dust is an elaborate Mardi Gras float, with a huge puppet hanging from it.

1. OVERTURE

At curtain: a trap door flies open, a rifle is thrown up onto the stage and Willy Beau, a young black man, enters wearing an R.O.T.C. uniform and carrying a rifle. He's come to this space often, to quietly live out fantasies with his mannequin friends. Feeling secure, he sings to them while changing into various costumes:

2. (Song) SAFE NOW (Willy Beau)

Outside, amplified, Mayor Anderson calls up to Willy Beau to give himself up for killing someone— a black man. Willy Beau blocks out the shooting incident—wildly shoots out some rounds over the mob—and in a kind of self-induced, frenzied amnesia, now retreats into violent fantasies that involve corruption and/or madness of historical or mythical black characters—and also involve a once actual place in New Orleans, called Congo Square, where the slaves were allowed to dance and release their joy!

(First musical fantasy:

Willy Beau as the corrupt black boy about to bribe the natives from Congo Square.

(Songs:)

3. CONGO SQUARE ON SUNDAY (Willy Beau)

4. DANSE CALINDA (Willy Beau)

5. TWO FACE! SPLIT TONGUE! (Willy Beau)

Pressed further by the amplified Mayor Anderson, Willy Beau moves into his Second musical fantasy: as the corrupt, swashbuckling, 19th century mulatto sword master and seducer of white women, Bastille Croquere.

(Song:)

6. I'M BASTILLE CROQUERE (Willy Beau)

A white woman, Delphine, finds her way into the secret, magical, space. In his fear and her confusion, she faints, Willy Beau thinks he's killed her and, guilty, retreats to a fantasy where he imagines himself as the tragic black jazz trumpeter, Buddy Bolden.

Third musical fantasy:

(Song:)

7. MY NAME IS BUDDY BOLDEN (Willy Beau)

Delphine revives; tells Willy Beau she works as a waitress downstairs in the *Chateau Laveau*, and has followed him this time to persuade him to give himself up—something that would make all of New Orleans finally see her, "Miss Nonentity." She also claims she knows him. But Willy Beau can't remember—doesn't want to remember; instead, he seduces her into his fantasy worlds.

4th musical fantasy:

In drag, Willy Beau becomes a corrupt but generous and elegant Storyville Madam of the Chateau Laveau—and transforms Delphine from frightened loser —into a Star!

(Songs:)

- 8. WHA, WAH WAH! (Willy Beau)
- 9. ELEGANCE AND GRACE (Willy Beau)
- 10. STAR! (Delphine)

Overwhelmed at Willy Beau's ability to give her self confidence and totally attracted to him now— and also secure in *his* fantasy world—Delphine fills in more of the jig saw pieces of their lives—and Willy Beau begins to remember; and when Mayor Anderson's amplified voice once again intrudes, Willy Beau recalls more details of some major corrupt enterprise that the Mayor is involved in — and retreats into *an even more brutal Fifth musical fantasy*:

Willy Beau and Delphine as the infamous butchers of New Orleans: *The white Madame DeMaurier and her black butler/lover, Giles*; who torture her black slaves, are discovered; but who, like so many of the Mighty, escape retribution.

Songs:)

- 11. THE BIG HOUSE ON ROYAL STREET (Willy Beau)
- 12. AND SHE DANCES (Willy Beau)
- 13. YES, THERE WAS THE LIE (Willy Beau)
- 14. AND ONTO THE CARRIAGE (Willy Beau)

The act ends with Willy Beau and Delphine dancing wildly and knocking over mannequins. Mayor Anderson's amplified voice is heard. *"I'm coming up. You and I have got to meet."*
 . . .But the dancers keep dancing . . .

END OF ACT ONE

(Song Breakdown)

ACT 2

The Dancers are still dancing. Mayor Anderson, a Black Man, comes on — he's found a secret entrance into the room — the anus of a horse float. He's captured, —admits he is involved in a major corruption— but warns Willy Beau that Willy Beau's father is also involved and will be implicated if exposed. Willy Beau agonizes over this:

(Song):

15. WHY CAN'T I BRING HIM IN CLEAR? (Willy Beau)

Mayor Anderson urges Willy to give up, take all the blame for killing the black man and not implicate the Mayor or his father or it will lead to Willy Beau's

(Song)

16. DESPAIR! (Mayor Anderson)

Willy Beau still can't remember killing anyone; but he's close to remembering. . .one more fantasy. . .this time it will be a fantasy with a larger-than-life black hero. And Mayor Anderson is forced to take part — be the heavy plantation owner in the

(Sixth musical fantasy:

Willy Beau as the swamp hero—Bras Coupé.

(Songs:)

17. SWAMP FEVER (Willy Beau and Delphine)

18. BRAS COUPE (Willy Beau, Delphine, Mayor Anderson)

In the fantasy The Mayor, as the Plantation Owner, gets Delphine to betray Bras Coupè. Willy Beau breaks out of the fantasy in despair.

(Song)

19. EVERYTHING ENDS (Willy Beau)

Mayor Anderson leads the defeated Willy Beau through a reenactment of the event where the black man was killed.

(Song)

20. MARCHING TO THE FAIR (Willy Beau)!

In a concluding confrontation, the corrupt mayor is killed and Willy Beau and his Delphine are willing to face all the consequences of their actions now; decide to stay in their magical world and they waltz and waltz and waltz— as the wrecking ball hits and hits and hits; and the whole world collapses around them. But, through it all, they keep waltzing, waltzing

(finale)

21. WALTZ TO

CURTAIN